

# INSTALLATION GUIDE; LAMINATE FLOOR

Installing a laminate floor is a common project for the DIYer who has some light carpentry experience, and who is comfortable with table saws and other related tools.

In this section of the Laminate flooring Learning Center, we're going to get into the details of how this process should go. But, before we do, and for those of you who appreciate the visual medium, here's a video to help you get an overall idea of what a laminate flooring installation is going to entail.

With that in mind, below are some details that you may wish to take into consideration when it comes to success with a laminate floor installation project.

## Preparing For a Laminate Flooring Installation

Preparing for a laminate flooring installation is a simple way to achieve the most efficient use of your time. There are three important issues to think about before the day of laminate installation: Furniture, appliances and fixed objects.

**Furniture:** Remove all your furniture and other objects from the job site where laminate installation will take place.

**Appliances:** Your appliances need to be disconnected and removed from the space you're preparing. For a laminate flooring installation

**Fixed Objects:** For better finishing, fixed objects such as posts and fireplace surrounds need to be included into your plan when preparing for a laminate flooring installation.

## Pre-installation instructions

**A swift and easy process of installation can take place if you carefully prepare for the installation. Here are a few instructions:**

- Make sure that the subfloor is flat, dry, and smooth.
- Always use underlayment under your laminate floor for soundproofing and stability.
- Laminate flooring and underlayment/vapor barrier can be installed on any existing floor whether concrete, wood flooring, vinyl tile, linoleum, tile, etc as long as the floor is flat and solid. The foam pad will make up for minor irregularities.
- Allow the flooring material to acclimatize to the installation site for as long as possible (min. 2 to 3 days). This allows the flooring to adjust to the room temperature and humidity.
- Examine each floor plank for grade, color, finish, quality and defects.
  
- Laminate floor installation should take place at room temperature of at least 65°F (15°C). A floor surface temperature of 59°F and an overall room temperature of 64°F must be ensured before, during and three days after the installation.
- The beginning wall of the flooring (the wall where you start installing the new floor) should be more visible than your ending wall.

- Remove any previous carpeting or wood flooring glued to a concrete floor.
- A good visual effect can be achieved by mixing planks from 4 to 5 different boxes. The width of the joint between the tiles on each strip may vary. Using these strips and placing thin joints next to thick joints gives a more natural look.
- After measuring the area of the floor to be covered with the laminate, add 10% to allow as wastage.
- If your room is larger than 1,000 square feet, you must use inch spacers to create expansion space around the border of the room and any pipes, doorframes, cabinets, or fixed objects etc.
- If your room is smaller, a gap 0.50 of inch can work. These gaps allow for expansion and contraction. The exposed edges can be concealed with trim or molding.
- To install flooring around pipes, drill a hole in the plank that is half or a quarter inch larger than the pipe diameter. Cut the plank across the center of the circle, fit around the pipe on the floor, glue plank pieces back together and clamp (do not glue laminate to subfloor). Cover expansion gaps with molding or pipe rings when the floor is complete. Water pipes require silicone sealant.
- To replace any planks damaged during installation, raise the last installed board approximately 1-2 inches until it disengages. Continue until you reach the affected plank, replace and reinstall the planks.

### **Underlayment installation**

**Underlayment** is a material placed under flooring to provide a smooth and even installation surface. It comes in large rolls or as separate pieces that can be taped together. The use of an underlayment speeds installation, reduces walking noise, improves flooring stability and provides superior support.

- Remove the shoe molding from around the baseboard and also the doors from the installation area to be covered.
- The flooring planks need additional space to fit under doorframes. Place a piece of underlayment and laminate flooring next to the jamb to determine the required height, and cut out the desired area of the frame.
- Install the underlayment and make sure the edges don't overlap. To prevent them from shifting, tape the pieces together. Create an expansion gap between the underlayment and walls by using spacers.
- If you're placing a laminate floor on top of a concrete slab, apply a polyethylene plastic vapor barrier before installing the underlayment.

### **Floating or glue less installation method**

Ease of installation is one of the key advantages of laminate flooring. One of the two do-it-yourself installment options is the floating or glue less method. In this method, the flooring is not secured to the subfloor. Instead, it allows each board to be connected by means of a tongue-and-groove design. Around eight inches by four feet long, these planks click together to form a firmly fastened surface.

Not only easier, the glue less flooring planks are installed approximately 50% faster on an average than the traditional methods of installation.

## Materials requirement:

- Straight edge
- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Marker
- Speed square (to test angles)
- Scissors
- Hammer
- Coping saw
- Circular saw with fine-tooth blade
- Safety goggles
- Clamps
- Wall spacer wedges
- Tapping block
- Last row puller (prybar)
- Laminate flooring
- Underlay (foam, vinyl or cork are popular choices)

## Installation procedure

- Flooring planks should be preferably installed with their length parallel to the incoming sunlight.
- Start the installation from the left corner of the room. Cut off the tongue of the planks, and run them parallel to the wall with the help of expansion spacers.
- Install each plank by inserting one end into the other at an angle and pressing down.
- On reaching the end of the row, measure and trim the last plank to fit.
- Cut a new plank similar to the pattern of the first row and start the next row with this plank.
- Lift the previous row slightly to fit the next planks into position. Now give a sharp rap to the next line of boards with your hand to fully engage and press them down firmly.
- Continue with this procedure with the rest of the flooring.
- The last row should be the same width as the first row. Trace the wall outline and remember to leave space for expansion.
- Trim and remove excess plastic sheeting and spacers. Reinstall baseboards without nailing to the floor.
- Flooring should extend under the doorframe. Use a piece of scrap flooring to mark the depth that the doorframe should be trimmed.